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Comparative Analysis of Educational Systems in Japan and Bangladesh

Abstract

This paper evaluates the educational systems of Japan and Bangladesh. The educational systems of both countries intend to provide quality education to their students. The Japanese educational system is inclined toward global trends, striving to produce citizens who are aware of current changes around the world. The Bangladeshi system, under the Madrasah education scheme, aims to provide their students with sufficient information to face the world. The similarities of the two educational systems lie in the input of the governments in facilitating the systems that provide education to children who have come of age. The foundations of the systems are rooted in the cultural practices of the respective countries, along with the provision of the staff and government policies that guide the work in the schools. The differences between the two systems are defined by their policy directives. The policy directive in Bangladesh is based on the UN Child Rights Convention which ensures that the rights of children form the major area of consideration. The policy is geared towards the cultivation of human values. It works as a basis for a system that is available, universal, science oriented and one that seeks to counter all problems. The Japanese education system is based on its national laws as well as the Constitution. It provides for free compulsory education for all the children in relation to their abilities. The law sets policies geared towards creating moral and able members of the society. This paper argues that the government of any country should lay emphasis on education, as it forms the basis of a country's economy and helps to shape students into responsible, competent global citizens of the future.

Keywords: Japan, Bangladesh, education system, comparative analysis, government

Introduction

An educational system is a set of activities that are said to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge by an individual. Each country has an educational system that their schools are expected to follow to ensure that the intended skills, knowledge and information are passed to the learners. The educational system is intended for public schools and for private education, and is said to cover the stages of preschool, basic education and secondary school. Each system is comprised of regulations that govern it and funding provided by the public and its government to fund all resources, staff and learning materials.

Comparative analysis

Views and visions

This report will analyze the similarities and differences between the educational systems in Bangladesh and Japan. This first section discusses the views and visions of these systems.

The Japanese educational system strives toward global trends, which are aimed at producing citizens that are cognizant of the current changes. The Japanese educational system holds the view that the system is to be used to the advantage of all students, despite their age, color and gender. Therefore, it provides equal learning opportunities to all children willing to learn. The system envisions continuing to be the best in the world by constantly improving the curriculum to fit global changes.

The Bangladeshi educational system holds the view that students receive an education solely based on the cultural and religious beliefs of the country, hence the production of citizens who are morally upright. Their vision expects that the education system will produce students with the necessary skills to successfully engage with the challenges of daily living (Murad & Hossain, 2014).

Similarities

The educational systems and policies that govern Bangladeshi and Japanese education have a number of similarities. The two countries acknowledge that education is the backbone of a successful economy; therefore, they put education matters first. For instance, Bangladeshi system buttresses on the ability to maintain the culture and religious beliefs (McQuiggan & Sapp, 2014). Their policies state that basic education should be available to all children of school age. Thus, the two systems have adopted primary and secondary education to provide basic education to their children (McQuiggan & Sapp, 2014). This policy is supported by the laws and regulations developed by the countries' governments, whereby all parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children acquire basic education through the public or private system.

Another similarity is that the governments have firsthand input in ensuring that their schools are financially supported with the help of the public. An educational system requires that many resources be allocated to it (Prokop & Michelson, 2012). The governments therefore assist in obtaining resources and finances for books, classrooms, and learning materials.

Additionally, the public schools of both countries need a workforce that constitutes teachers and support staff to offer curriculum and activities in the schools. Therefore, employment policies have been put into place (Snider, 2014). These governments ensure that, before an individual is employed as a teacher in their institutions, they must have completed the tertiary part of the country's education system. Teachers in the two countries are expected to be sufficiently qualified to provide quality education to their students.

The policies and education systems of the two countries also base their education systems on their respective cultures and practices. In this regard, their institutions have adopted behaviors and teaching practices in line with their particular cultural beliefs. For example, Bangladesh has adopted the Madrasah form of education, whereby students are taught Islamic beliefs and culture. In Japan too, the education system is best understood from its cultural perspective.

Another similarity is a governing body that regulates the workings of the education systems. Both in Japan and Bangladesh, a Ministry of Education ensures that the school curriculum is correctly followed. Also, the two educational systems have policies that student assessments and standardization of examinations are

public. Upon completion of one class or grade, a student is expected to sit for an examination (Taylor & Klein, 2015).

Differences between Bangladeshi and Japanese educational curriculum and policies

Despite the similarities in the educational systems and policies of Japan and Bangladesh, differences are easily visible. Funding is one of these major differences. In Bangladesh, only 2% of the total GDP is allocated to education; hence, it cannot sufficiently fund its programs and policies. By contrast, public spending on education in Japan was 3.5% of GDP, according to a 2015 Education at a Glance report. However, even this percentage is below the recommended OECD estimate of 4.7% (OECD, 2015).

Another difference in the education systems of the two countries is the relevance of the education provided. Curriculum is the connecting force between the educational system and the social/political events in the public sector. Japan has programs that regularly review the curriculum; therefore, the education system is generally in line with current events. By contrast, the Bangladeshi curriculum programs are not frequently reviewed; hence, the education system does not relate to the current happenings in their environment (Brooks, 2011).

The third difference revolves around the quality of education made available to the students. The education system in Bangladesh does not have an effective employment program for school staff, because they lack a good human resource system (Chan, 2011). This shortcoming leads to a poor education system. On the other hand, Japan has a good human resource system, with employment based on merit. A workforce system that hires workers on the basis of qualifications leads to a higher quality education.

Fourthly, the oversight of higher education differs in these two countries. This can be determined by noting whether the number of seats found in a college is similar to the number of present and potential students (Hannum, Park & Butler, 2010). For example, the colleges in Bangladesh do not meet the international standards that govern education systems. On the other hand, Japan's colleges and universities are governed according to the international standards of education. Thus, the number of seats in the lecture halls is greater than the number of students attending.

In Bangladesh, the policies that govern the conduct of teachers and the school workforce are not well defined. Additionally, the governing bodies that are responsible for monitoring the behavior of teachers are not active. This shortcoming allows for the unethical behavior of teachers, which includes absenteeism (Hedtke & Zimenkova, 2013). According to a study done here, primary school teachers record an approximate 15.5% rate of absence. On the contrary, the Japanese government applies very strict policies to the conduct of teachers. The bodies that regulate teacher behavior hold a teacher responsible in cases of absence or low quality instruction. Due to this factor, the rate of absenteeism is very low; hence, students receive high value for their time in class.

The last difference between the two countries is the foundational basis of the education systems and policies. Bangladesh has adopted the Madrasah form of education, whereby students are taught Islamic beliefs and culture, along with other

subjects that focus on improving the way students handle various situations (Hannum, Park & Butler, 2010). The education system of the Japanese, however, is based on current developments in the world. For instance, the students are provided experience in the development of IT systems and the use of technical knowledge in the production and manufacturing sectors, among other experiences. Also, Japanese students are exposed to extracurricular activities to increase their innovation and experimental abilities.

Practices and policies in Japan that Bangladesh should borrow

Japan has been rated as the best educational system in the world. It is noted to have the highest number of children going to school, thus its literacy skills are also high. To improve the systems of education of Bangladesh then, the Japanese system must be adopted (Snider, 2014).

The first practice that the Bangladeshi educational system should borrow from Japan is the foundation of the educational curriculum (Dautenhahn & Saunders, 2011). The educational system in Bangladesh is based on religious activities, thus omitting the relevance of education in today's world. Therefore, the education system of Bangladesh should include global trends and perspectives alongside their religion-based system.

The second agenda that would benefit the Bangladeshi education system would be the Japanese regulations that govern the conduct of teachers in and out of the classrooms (Tatto & Bruner, 2012). The implementation of similar regulations would ensure that the rate of absenteeism among teachers in the primary school sector is greatly reduced, thus the quality of education improved. Moreover, the government of Bangladesh should develop a hiring process that is based on the qualifications of a teacher.

Additionally, the government of Bangladesh needs to provide more financial resources to ensure that quality education is possible. Bangladesh needs to borrow the aspect of standardization of structures and learning facilities for all students (Hedtke & Zimenkova, 2013). The Bangladeshi government should also ensure that sufficient vacancies are available in their colleges for students who are willing to continue with higher education. In addition, the government needs to allocate sufficient resources to ensure that schools can adequately function, as well as offer scholarships to the poor families who cannot afford school fees.

According to studies, the government of Japan sends its students to other countries on scholarship programs and also allows foreign students to enroll in their schools, hence providing population diversity (Horiguchi, Imoto & Poole, 2015). This is an issue that the government of Bangladesh should consider, in order to enhance its education system. The absorption of foreign students into the Bangladeshi educational system is currently chaotic, as the government has not put in control measures.

Bangladesh could improve its teacher instruction by emulating the Japanese model of classroom teaching. Teachers in Japan use an interactive teaching method, allowing students to interact with their fellow students and also with their teachers, rather than lecturing to students who are not actively involved. Bangladesh has adopted a lecture method in their teaching, whereby the interaction of students and

teachers during class time is limited; this is negatively affecting the performance of their system (Trifonas, 2015).

The inclusion of international aspects in the curriculum should form the basis of education improvement in Bangladesh. This would require that curriculum be reviewed and a global perspective added in a way that expects children to be involved practically, as well as in theory. Adopting an international perspective helps education remain relevant to current trends and improves the quality of education in the country.

Strengths of Bangladeshi system

According to the international educational system requirements, the role of an educational system is to produce students who are morally upright and uphold the highest standards of ethics. The Bangladeshi educational system has its roots in the Islamic behaviors and practices of the people in that country, the Madrasah education system. Therefore, the students produced by this education are a pride to their nation and their parents in terms of good behavior. The Madrasah education system and its adaptation in the public school curriculum is a strength that supports the culture of Bangladesh, hence its sustainability in an ever-changing environment (Ida, 2015).

Limitations of Bangladeshi system

The limitations in the Bangladeshi education system greatly surpass its strengths. The following are noted, in addition to those weaknesses already described in previous sections.

Firstly, *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* require that girls and boys are given equal opportunities for education and skill development. The first limitation is that the government does not take gender equality into consideration in the school system; girls are not allowed the same opportunities as boys (Hannum, Park & Butler, 2010). This is a clear violation of the UN Convention and the international standards on education.

The second limitation is based on the hiring process of teachers, as well as the remaining workforce in the school environment. The international standards that govern educational systems demand that hired teachers should be competent and fully skilled. Bangladesh hires teachers and support staff in terms of recognition by the authorities and by bribes. Due to this situation, Bangladesh needs to develop an established system of teacher recruitment and employment to ensure that only qualified persons are hired to teach. When the system is governed by individuals who are competent and trained, then the quality and standards of the entire education system increase, to the advantage of the country's economy.

Strengths of Japanese system

Japan is known to have the best educational system in the world, thereby having more strengths than weaknesses. According to the international standards, the educational system of a country should take into consideration rapport between the individuals involved, aimed at improving the learning processes. Japan has emulated

this strategy, whereby the learning and teaching processes have been made interactive, rather than lecture based (Dautenhahn & Saunders, 2011).

The international standards of education expect parents and teachers to be involved in all aspects of a student's life. Thus, Japan's second strength is the motivational spirit that is cultivated in students by their parents and teachers. Teachers play an important role in promoting this, as they allow their students to express themselves through learning. Parents also play a vital role by constantly encouraging their children to perform well, to be physically and mentally involved in their school work. As a result, Japan reports very minimal student absenteeism, late arrival and low performance.

Limitations of Japanese system

In relation to the standards of educational systems that are internationally recognized, students are expected to have break periods between their school terms, so as to allow them to rest and bond with their family and friends away from books (Brooks, 2011). However, in Japan, children are always in contact with books; for instance, during weekends, they are expected to attend classes that teach them life skills, i.e. knitting and cooking. Also, during the summer and spring holidays, students are expected to complete several assignments to submit when the next term begins. This can result in a student being psychologically and mentally fatigued, hence affecting their academic performance.

Findings

This report has determined that an education system is the driving force of an economy; therefore, many aspects need to be present to determine its success. Evidence shows that when a country's education system is aware of global trends, then the students reap the best education to steer their lives towards success (Chan, 2011). Thus, the number of well-informed people increases, which results in a better workforce and an increase in GDP.

Another finding that is derived from the report is that teachers are the main drivers of an education system, as they are wholly involved in the development of the curriculum that governs the system. Teachers are the main beneficiaries of a good system and the main losers in a bad system, so they ought to be involved in every decision that relates to education (Begum, 2015). Their well-being should be safeguarded and their interest taken into account to protect the competency of a country's education system. Their hiring and training processes should be developed with care, and quality should be the main agenda driving the planning. Moreover, their remuneration should be greatly considered to help them satisfy their personal needs and avoid the frustrations that may affect their performance in schools.

Conclusion

An educational system is an organization of procedures, programs, and policies that are expected to govern the learning and teaching processes of schools in a given country. Many factors may hinder or promote the success of a system. For instance, curriculum development provides the framework for education. The country's

government also plays an important role in ensuring that the educational systems are successful.

Bangladesh and Japan are two distinct countries that have educational systems based on their cultures; however one is more successful than the other. Bangladesh does not have well-defined policies, producing a number of weaknesses in its education system. By contrast, Japan's policies and agendas are carefully crafted, thus it has become the world's leading country in terms of educational policies and systems.

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